

BOUNTY HUNTERS

THRILL OF THE HUNT

IN STAR FRONTIERS™

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Below are the stipulations and ordinances for serving as an independent officer of the court for special purposes. When you have read through this document, filled out the necessary documents in triplicate, passed inspection by the appropriate authorities, taken the oath of law enforcement, and received the bounty hunter's certificate of license, you will be permitted to pursue and capture any individual to which a bounty, local or interstellar, has been attached, with expectation to receive assistance by all law enforcement bodies and the public. Please read these laws carefully and proceed to your local law enforcement office for review.

Author's Note: These bounty hunter rules are strictly story related. Some are unplayable in game as nothing more than story elements, while others are at the discretion of the Referee to require of the bounty hunter or not. This article has been play-tested for playability. Be sure to let me know about any issues or comments you have.

The popularized fiction often tends to confuse bounty hunters with assassins, manhunters and underworld enforcers. However, even they are considered here. (See *Underworld Hunter Types* below.) Most bounty hunters would rather deliver their bounty alive, not just for moral reasons, but because if they have a reputation for killing their prey when they don't have to, it makes the business more dangerous for them and all bounty hunters in general. However, there are those unscrupulous few who view a bounty as a license to kill to legally satisfy their morbid preoccupation with killing. But for the rest, it is a means to gain some cash and to look good while doing it.

The television show, "Wanted: Dead or Alive", was my first experience with bounty Hunters. Steve McQueen as Josh Randall, the ex-civil war soldier with a sawed-off shotgun, traveling the broad frontier collecting bounties on the heads of ruthless men, bank robbers, escaped felons, and even those framed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time gave me a fascination with the bounty hunting profession that would last a lifetime. I also kept up with the corresponding "Jonah Hex" comics. Later, Boba Fett became my hero (as well as the hero of millions, or anti-hero as the case may be, though technically a villain) when I saw him on the big screen in "The Empire Strikes Back". There was no one cooler. A more recent bounty hunter was Lesley

Coombs and his band of mercs from "The Chronicles of Riddick". Today we have the real exploits of Duane "The Dog" Chapman and family in the show Dog: the Bounty Hunter, showing us how quality bounty hunting is done. With his impeccable record of bounty captures with no killing, we get a new respect for how bounty hunting is done.

OBTAINING A LICENSE

Pursuing freelance law enforcement untrained and without a license is discouraged by Star Law. Though neither the UPF nor Star Law provides such, and many jurisdictions don't require either, while some require one or both. Obtaining a bounty hunter's license, where necessary, often requires at least one 2nd-level ranged weapons skill. You may even be expected to have some knowledge of the law regarding bounty hunters and criminal apprehension and rights. (See *Rules of the Hunt* below) Be sure to check in with your local law enforcement office in the town or city of the world you're on.

The Environmental skill may also be a boon to the bounty hunter.

BOUNTY HUNTER TYPES

First of all, bounty hunters are not soldiers of fortune, or mercenaries of any kind. They are independent law enforcement officials with limitations and freedoms that police and other government officers do not have. In fact, many used to be law enforcement officers of one kind or other. Bounty hunters can be sanctioned through a number of means. Below are the types of bounty hunters arising from those means and circumstances.



Interplanetary (Federation) Bounty Hunters track down only the most dangerous criminals, tracking them to any planet in and out of the Frontier.

Company Bounty Hunters are on the payroll of a megacorp to track down enemies of the corporation and outlaws from the colonies owned by the company.

Guild Bounty Hunters share in tracking down criminals by maintaining communication with the guild to receive bounty assignments and to share information on escaped bounties that other bounty hunters might be able to pick up the trail on.

Local Independent Bounty Hunters look for bounties wherever the bounty hunter may be and are subject to no one and will not likely waste their resources on tracking down a bounty on another world than the one they're on..

Rounders, also known as "bail enforcers", or "fugitive recovery agents", are flat fee bounty hunters who take a prepared "book" of bounty subjects (typically smalltime offenders) who have jumped bail in a local area, usually just a city, and go about rounding them up, as most bail jumpers don't put up much of a fight. Any that the rounder can't find that day, he reports to the bail bonds-

man as an inability to track them down, and the bounty goes up on them by a marginal percentage each week until they are caught.

Rounders are generally courteous, acting more like bored police officers who would rather make the arrest by phone, as the subject is just another stop on their way to the end of the day. Rounders are unique for their simple plain clothes or modest business attire. While they wear protective gear under their clothing and a concealed weapon, they don't alarm people when they approach. Subjects know that they can easily run from a rounder and not likely get caught, so they almost never fire on a rounder.

Rounders get a flat fee in addition to the meager bounty as they are in the employ of the bail bondsman. In some locations, police do the rounding. The pay rate is determined by the economy of the territory, but is typically within the range of 5 credits per hour. At the end of the day, the rounder turns in their book.

UNDERWORLD HUNTER TYPES

Though not bounty hunters of the legal type, the following underworld types do pursue bounties of an unscrupulous nature.

Assassins. Though not officially considered a bounty hunter, due to their illegal nature, assassins still follow many of the same procedures as bounty hunters and do collect a bounty, though usually receiving some amount of pre-paid compensation and never worrying about the body.

Enforcer. An enforcer is a hired gun in the employ of a wealthy businessman or underworld kingpin. These are knowledgeable and resourceful men with no moral center. They track down debtors and threats to the benefactor's interests. Whether breaking arms, removing fingers, gouging eyes, or spilling brains or guts, the enforcer does whatever is asked of them. They are paid weekly on untraceable credit sticks.

Manhunters. There are dark underground games that the rich play involving hunting men. One is known as "Hunter and Prey" in which individuals of age pay a large entry fee for a number of hunts, the first half as prey, the second half as hunter. Each hunter is given basic information about their prey, and the prey is informed that the hunt is on. Kills must be performed in person by the hunter their self. Anyone surviving all hunts as both prey and hunter receives anything their heart desires for the

rest of their life and is likewise protected from all prosecution.

Another such game, known simply as "The Arena", involves prisoners, in which an individual pays to track down prisoners for a number of rounds of a specified period of time (hours, days, weeks) as mere sport. Any prisoner that survives a number of "levels" or hunts is set free. The hunter that survives is awarded various gifts and assurances, and may even get some amount of notoriety, as it is a spectator sport. Both types of games are a major underground betting franchise.

Another version of the Arena involves controlling the prisoners themselves remotely with a cyberslave implant instead of the hunter's own physical participation. This increases jeopardy to the prisoner because they have no control of their body, while making it entirely safe for the controller.

TYPES OF BOUNTIES

There are many types of bounties that a bounty hunter can pursue. Some even require such a specific skill set or clientele that they shape the career of the hunter. If you have a spaceship to maintain, the more rewarding bounties will be the best to go after, but are also the hardest. Unless otherwise specified in the bounty offer, you must bring your bounty in alive and relatively unharmed to the agency specified in the bounty offer to receive your reward. Sources for bounty postings and reward ranges are found below.

Bounty rewards are established by the Referee or setting material.

Bail Bond. Skipping bail, also known as running, is the most common bounty, and among the least lucrative, though some *can* be lucrative. These will almost never include kill orders or permissions. Bail jumpers don't always go to jail. Often, the rounder simply takes the subject to court for immediate judgment regarding their bail jump. They do not concern themselves with the bail jumper after that. Other bail jumpers may have missed their court date.

Bench Warrant. Those with a substantial case at law may have bench warrants posted for them with monetary figures attached for missing their trial date. These are rarely pursued by bounty hunters on account of their low bounty and the fact that the missing individual is likely either dead or already fled the territory or get rounded

up at home by the police or at a bar by a rounder. A bench warrant is typically worth between 50 to 100,000 Credits, based upon 10% of their bail, though are usually anywhere between 200 to 8,000 Credits, though can be more depending on the value of the subject.



Deactivation (Robots). Some robots have proven dangerous to the public well-being, while possessing enough artificial intelligence, or through serendipity are able to elude capture, and as such they must be tracked down and terminated with prejudice. Robot corporations are the usual benefactors for these bounties, as they wish to reduce the legal damages that ensue from one of their robots on a rampage. A hefty bounty is well worth the cost to them, as they are saving millions of credits in payouts. The bounties for robots are generally estimated according to how difficult they are expected to be in capturing. This puts most robots at little more than 20,000 Credits, but some can be worth up to around 1,000,000 Credits. The higher bounties usually involve an area-wide manhunt (or bothunt rather), so that if you pursue it, know that every bit of competition is out there looking for it alongside you. That's when you want to be at your best.

Dead or Alive. Here it is, the bounty we're all most familiar with. However, what is not commonly identified these days is that there is often a higher bounty granted for bringing the individual in alive. This is to discourage ruthless and unnecessary killing. This is typically reserved for the most wanted criminals who have eluded capture or enclaved area rebels. Dead or Alive bounties typically reward between 20,000 to 600,000 Credits, though much higher bounties have been known.

Delinquent (Private). Due to the owing of an inordinate sum of money, the subject of the bounty has earned a substantial bounty on their head for their safe return to the individuals to whom they owe money in order to pay it back. This is usually a next-to-last resort for a businessman seeking to make an example of the individual.

Official debt collectors and perhaps repo persons have already been exhausted, and now it's time to step things up. In addition to the money the individual owed, they now owe the cost of their own bounty. The next step is a step no businessman wants to have to take, and one which bounty hunters have no part in. Delinquency bounties net within 5,000 to 500,000 Credits. Alternate remuneration is common among delinquent bounties. (See Remuneration below.)

Independent (Private). An independent bounty is one in which the individual is wanted by authorities or for questioning in regard to a criminal act, but the authorities have viewed it as not significant enough to warrant a bounty so that a private or corporate benefactor has put up the funds. These bounties generally pay between 1,000 to 500,000 credits, though most often between the 5,000 and 10,000 credit range. This is the most frequent cause of alternate remuneration. (See Remuneration below.)

Recovery (Private). Runaways and kidnapped individuals often have bounties put on them by their families to recover them quickly and safely. These will almost always be worth the bounty as the families are paying good money to recover the missing family member. This may also apply to family pets and stolen items. Recovering a missing subject is easily worth 10,000 to 1,000,000 Credits. Almost all recovery bounties are covered by alternate remunerations. (See Remuneration below.) These bounties are often split into dead or alive, though not meaning they want the person dead, but that if the person happens to be dead, only half the reward, or even less, will be paid. If the bounty subject must be helped to escape from someplace and they die in the process, it may be stipulated that the reward will be forfeited.

Shoot on Sight. This is the typical bounty for escaped convicts, traitors, and terrorists. Once escaped, convicts, especially murderers, are considered guilty and a danger to the public, as they are desperate and might do anything to keep their new found freedom. Traitors and terrorists are the most dangerous prey of all, because they usually have, even if rudimentary, covert ops training. Shoot on sight bounties are typically between 20,000 to 1,000,000 Credits. This bounty is still subject to civilian laws, thus shooting into a crowd is still considered public endangerment and stupid from a legalistic standpoint.

Slave Bond. Except for the core worlds, slavery has not been outlawed on all worlds in and beyond the Frontier.

Masters will often pay good money to have their slaves returned to them, but usually because they don't want word of some shady dealings of theirs getting out. While perhaps decent bounties for augmenting income, these are rarely substantial and always local. Slaves that make it off-world have either achieved their freedom, or once again become subject to slave traders and are generally not worth the cost of a ship's overhaul, though are just the right bounty for paying for such. (See Slave Traders below.) Returning a slave usually pays between 1,000 to 50,000 Credits, depending on the desperation of the master. This could also lead to some interesting turn of the tables and good adventure.

RULES OF THE HUNT

Each planet and even the U.P.F. have guidelines that must be followed by bounty hunters. If a bounty hunter breaks one of these rules, they may find themselves on the other side of the bounty. The gist of the rules are as follows:

A SUSPECT HAS RIGHTS

What a suspect's rights are is dependent upon the jurisdiction, but the general rights enforced by the U.P.F. are: 1) The right to a trial, unless they are an escaped convict, then they may be shot only if a "shoot on sight" declaration has been made by the legislating power of the territory. 2) The right to food and clean water. 3) The right to fair treatment free from abuse, isolation, or torture.

NO DISINTEGRATIONS

Bounties with "shoot on sight" and "dead or alive" attached are the only bounties in which killing the suspect is acceptable. Though killing a "dead or alive" suspect in cold blood may earn penalties and even prosecution in some territories. With these bounties, you may only kill in self-defense or if there is no reasonable alternative.

If you must kill the subject, in many cases you are not permitted to disintegrate them because there is not enough physical evidence left over, though some may be

satisfied because they have the resources to come after you if the person is still alive after you have claimed them dead. While courts accept video evidence and witnesses to assist in prosecution, agents, even court-appointed agents, do not. Only a large amount of biological material will be acceptable as evidence. Merely presenting an arm is not, as it does not guarantee the death of its owner. Clones may be used to fool many agents, but some, particularly those with resources, will check not just DNA, but chemical compositions compared to life-style and diet to confirm the kill.

FAIR PURSUIT

You must not interfere with another hunter or court official's pursuit of a subject. Every hunter has the right to pursue their quarry without interference. To interfere with another bounty hunter's quarry carries the same penalties as interfering with an officer of the law, as every bounty hunter is considered a member of the law enforcement community. You may capture a bounty that another hunter is after and it is considered your bounty. You just cannot interfere with the other hunter's efforts.

See Competition below for more details.

SUBJECT TO CIVILIAN LAWS

You cannot break a law and expect to be free from the consequences. To kill without permission attached follows the same laws as civilian law: kill only in self-defense. If you kill another hunter, kill a suspect without decree or justification, kidnap a suspect from a jurisdiction where bounty hunting is not recognized,

destroy public or private property, or steal a vehicle, you will be engaged as a criminal in the jurisdiction where the crime occurs. A jurisdiction may be as small as a state/province on a planet, or as large as a planetary sector. Neither are you immune to extradition.

CREDENTIALS

You cannot pursue a suspect without credentials. You must be registered as a hunter on a world you begin a hunt on and you must go through the proper legal channels to continue a pursuit of a criminal off-world. This requires that, if the bounty is local, you notify the con-

"Hey, I get it. You hate me, and that's okay. Because tomorrow you'll be deciding which boyfriend you want to protect you and I'll be in my lounge chair deciding which wine to have with my brae." — *Jascen Tanet to Sawlis Glin (two-bit hood) prior to Sawlis's hanging himself in a pedantic tirade . . . for the third time.*

stabulary on the world that you started the hunt, for digital permission to pursue the criminal off-world at the time you are preparing to leave. Then you must inform the U.P.F. while in transit, before you capture the criminal, that you are in pursuit of a wanted criminal. You may only pursue that criminal into another territory if that territory allows you to do so. Athor, Pan-Gal, Helios, Outer Reach and New Pale never recognize the right of the hunter to continue their pursuit into their territory of another territory's bounty. Theseus, Ktsakar, Gollywog, and Gruna Garu each permit it only on a case-by-case basis.

ADHERENCE TO TERMS

Some bounties have specific stipulations. A bounty hunter must adhere to the terms laid down in the bounty or the agent may choose to withhold or alter the reward if the hunter does not. Law enforcement bodies are very strict about that and will not give up money they are not legally obligated to. So it is vitally important that the bounty hunter read and fully understand the bounty terms and make every possible effort to live up to those terms. It means the difference between getting paid or not being paid for the effort and expense of tracking down and apprehending the bounty subject.

LEGAL BOUNTIES

A bounty hunter is only permitted to engage in legal bounties, whether by private agents or by the authorities. If it is discovered that a bounty hunter has engaged in a bounty resulting in the harm of non-lethal bounty subjects, whether by the hunter or the agent, the bounty hunter's license will be revoked and the hunter will not be eligible for any other legal office in the U.P.F. A legal bounty is one in which an agent not under suspicion for criminal or subversive activities has put up a reward to apprehend, recover, or otherwise disable an individual for reasons specific to the agent, relative to the agent's legal status, official title, or authoritative approval, if any. Thus, you should be sure that the individual acting as the agent has the legal standing to post the type of bounty they are requesting. Pretty much any legal citizen not under suspicion for illegal or subversive activities can post a bounty to recover a lost family member, but only a person with the legal authority granted by the government can post a "dead or alive" or "shoot on sight" bounty. In some cases, a corporation acts as a government for a specific region or a family of a victim puts up

a reward for capture of a subject dead or alive with special approval of local authorities.

ASSIST AUTHORITIES

A hunter must answer the call to assist authorities or another hunter where able. If you are a registered bounty hunter in the territory or U.P.F., you must assist another bounty hunter or other law enforcement official if you are requested, unless you are otherwise engaged in another bounty or are incapacitated in any way. While one's excuses are not always investigated, it is important to have evidence to support any reason for refusing to assist. If you are found to be negligent in fulfilling a request for assistance, you may have all law enforcement licenses revoked for a set period or even indefinitely.

COMPETITION

Competition between bounty hunters or other law enforcement officials doesn't happen very often, except with the most notorious bounties. When this happens, bounty hunters may try ever more daring and tricky attempts to capture the bounty. And even though the rules of the hunt are clear about not interfering with other hunters, they still often skirt the law with indirect attempts at interference. However, besides other bounty hunters, there is other competition to worry about. Though similar to bounty hunters, slave traders and assassins work outside the law.

ASSASSINS

Those who are wanted by the law are sometimes wanted by assassins as well, making them dangerous competitors. Assassins are often better trained than you are and more determined, as the price on the person's head is likely more than the bounty. Also, assassins won't hold back in removing you as an obstacle, though killing will generally be a last resort for them, as killing is their stock and trade. If they don't get paid for a kill, they don't want to up the risk to themselves by taking more risks than necessary. Likely they will use every other underhanded trick in the world to get you out of the way, including keeping the authorities busy with chasing you so that the assassin has time to pursue the head without interference. However, once in your custody, you have to be weary of assassins on your subject's tail. You do not want a subject who is wanted alive, dying in your custody.

SLAVE TRADERS

Slave traders are opportunists and will keep track of off-world escaped slaves in order to capture them and resell them at full price, even using their bounty and the identity of their previous owner as reason to hike up their price. Thus slave traders are part of your competition. Slave traders also like to capture those with long-standing bounties and trade them as slaves as no one misses them, and they're likely to escape again, making them a continual turnover profit and raising the floodwaters, so to speak. Though such individuals do not usually carry as high a price as a slave that has proven their effectiveness. However, a criminal's turnover price (future sales) far exceeds their current slave price, making them worth the effort. Slave traders may also be the reason an owner has to put up a bounty for their slave, as slaves are often stolen from the market place by slave traders.

THUGS AND ENFORCERS

When a businessman has invested money in individuals, sometimes their only recourse is to physically apprehend the individual owing them credits and force them to hand over whatever funds they have available then and there. Thugs see such bounties as opportunities and they are not hindered by legalities, so they will take the delinquent individuals in any manner they choose, and even attempt to strong-arm the person for the money then and there and then deliver what they acquire, whether the individual or the credits to the one who put out the bounty. Thugs know that businessmen aren't usually particular about the conditions in which the individual is brought to them as long as they are brought back alive. So a conscientious bounty hunter may be concerned for the welfare of these kinds of bounties.

BOUNTY TERMS

Bid. An official declaration of one's pursuit of a bounty. When you make a bid, you contact a local law enforcement agency, digitally or directly, informing them of your intent to pursue. This is the only way you have legal support as a bounty hunter. It allows you to lodge complaints and protects you from unlawful or unintended interference. Often, you will only receive assistance from the public, and especially official channels, if your bid is registered.

agency. The individual or organization responsible for posting the bounty. This generally only appears on the bounty posting.

rounding. The process of rounding up bail jumpers.

a "book". More than one bounty subject pursued by a bounty hunter, commonly smalltime bail jumpers. Books are usually pre-collected according to geography and handed out to rounders.

arrest. Though you are not a policeman, when you acquire a bail jumper, bench warrant subject, or criminal suspect, you are actually performing an arrest. You do not have to worry about reading the suspect their rights, as this will be done at the station where they are received. Though you may remind officers to do so when you hand the subject over.

subject. Also called the "bounty subject". The one on whom the bounty is issued.

bounty. The potential reward to be received upon returning a subject to the assigned rendezvous.

badge. Though most authorities do not issue badges to bounty hunters, there are corporations, guilds, and some expediting agents that issue a badge to you to help facilitate information gathering and chases. The badge only identifies you as a bounty hunter in the service of that organization or agency. The badge is usually a gold star with the corporation's, guild's, or agent's insignia and provide you an assigned number and the subspace relay number of the issuing office. For federation bounty hunters, they can pay 10 Cr. for a gold star badge with the U.P.F. insignia that is issued for pursuit of the particular subject as long as their bid is registered. Once the subject has been caught, the badge is no longer in effect and must be turned in. You must still report your intent to hunt to local authorities.

THE HUNT

Hunting a bounty requires seven things: selection, information, resources, preparation, verification, method, and determination. Follow this list to ensure your catch. Below are ways to fulfill this list.

POSTING SOURCES

There are many places to find bounty postings, but different sources provide different difficulties and benefits. Use them as you can afford.

Law Enforcement Agencies. All criminal bounties are registered with their respective agencies. One local agency does not contain all the bounties in the Frontier, but only the local bounties, and perhaps the bounties of

nearby systems that the local agency is either responsible for or is a system to which those bounty subjects are likely to run. For this reason, bounty subjects that make unexpected decisions to come to a local system may not be in that system's databanks. Each law enforcement agency posting access costs 5 Cr. per access or 20 Cr. per month unlimited access with ability to make a bid by subspace.

Posting Agencies. Posting agencies attempt to track all bounties in the Frontier. They are the best place to acquire bounty postings for a small fee. Posting agencies cost a 50 Cr. per month flat rate for access and will forward your bid for you.

Bail Bond. Most people can't pay their bail without a bail bond. Bail bonders collect "books" of bail jumpers daily for various sections of a territory that they hand out to rounders each day. They also make available individual bounties for those who have raised their bounty above 1,000 Credits. Bail bonders don't cost anything and will even pay rounders by the hour to round up the day's book. (See *Bounty Hunter Types* above.)

Expediting Agent. These information brokers not only can find any bounty posting just moments after it is posted and take care of all legalities for you, but might even be able to give information on what the subject had for breakfast. An expediting agent will also put up funds for you before the adventure that you pay back when you receive the reward and for an extra cut will get cash credit for you in exchange for any alternate reward payments you receive (See Remuneration below). An expediting agent gets a percentage of the cut depending on the agent and their services.

Bounty Hunter's Guild. A Bounty Hunter's Guild not only provides brokered bounty information, but is a good place to get statistics on the likelihood of your success based on your personal hunting record and the reputation of the subject, helping you to be informed. Only registered guild members have access to such information. Guild membership costs 11% of all bounties captured. For that cost you get unlimited access to the guild's member benefits and loans. They also provide training as well as equipment and weapons discounts. The Gruna Garu Interception League and The Regulators

(from Fromeltar) are the two foremost bounty hunter's guilds in the Frontier.

There are many others, and they often hold competitions against each other or even internally, including competition hunts for both single hunters and teams. If you belong to any guild, you will be able to get assistance from most guilds and have access to their information database, but you will not have access to any other benefits from those guilds. Some smaller, more personal guilds specialize in particular types of bounties, such as robots or negotiations.

Corporate Office. Yes, a corporate office, particularly for a robot manufacturer, is a great place to find bounties that pay substantial dividends. Though they don't always have bounties available, when they do, you can be sure it will be well worth the effort. A corporation doesn't put up a bounty unless they risk losing innumerable credits.

SELECTING YOUR TARGET

Bounty selection is a crucial process. You don't want to select a target that is too dangerous for your skill level, or one whose bounty is too low to cover the expenses and life-sustaining profit. Of course, the Referee is likely to customize the bounty for you, but if they present you with a selection of bounties, be sure to select the one that you think suits you best and provides a reasonable income.

As mentioned above, you can use your local bounty hunter's guild to help you select a bounty, or an expediting agent. With posting agencies and law enforcement agencies, you will need to sift through many bounties and the information is generally unparsed and not customized to your needs.

WAYS AND MEANS

You cannot even begin, let alone continue, a hunt without the proper resources. You need the way opened up to you and the means to get there in order to track down the subject. Where they go, you need to be able to go, no matter where it is they go. Additionally, you must consider the cost of those resources. If the cost would come too close to the bounty figure, then it becomes advisable to drop the bounty to cut your losses. It is best to consider this before pursuing the bounty.

"Hot air and a few fleas do not a tough guy make. Now give up and come out from behind the — uh — Molly Polly plushy collection." — Jascen Tanet to Mordo, the Jacker.

Credits. Having credits on hand is of first and foremost importance. If you don't have the credits to finish the job, then you won't get the bounty. As in all things, you have to spend money to make money. (See Costs and Rewards below.) Getting an accountant is recommended.

Technology. The better your tech, the better chance you stand against your opponent as well as receiving updates and terrain information. For a substantial fee, a hunter can access a local satellite communication network, if available, to track their subject. (See Star Frontiersman #8, pp.1-2, 5.)

Trackers and Scouts. Bounty hunters rarely work alone. It is good to have trackers and scouts that you trust to help you locate and maintain visuals on your subject for modest fees, usually by the hour.

Weapons. Your weapons should not be the biggest and most damaging, but should be customized to your subject's defenses and allow you to run and act without being detained by local authorities. You should also invest in some non-lethal weapons, such as a tangler gun (See Star Frontiersman #5, p.3) and an electromagnetic signal stunner (See Star Frontiersman #7, p.27) and the like.

Travel Plans and Transportation. Have your means of transit prepared with the proper credentials and means of transportation, and/or pre-made travel plans in expectation of the subject's escape route.

Information Brokers. You should keep in touch with local underground information brokers for when you are in a jam or lose track of your subject and be ready to respond at a moment's notice. Their information could be as much as an hour old by the time it gets to you, so it is important to act quickly. Though they do not always have the information you need, they are a good source for the latest information.

Other Hunters. Due to their oath and the law, other hunters are eager to help hunt down a bounty if you ask them to, regardless of any personal tension between you and they. Just make sure the bounty is worth it for them. One bad hunt can get you black-listed.

Local Constabulary. The police are generally slow to respond, and usually only show up in time with particularly troublesome suspects. While they can't be relied upon in a pinch, they can be useful for helping corner a suspect that is just too slippery or dangerous. The police will follow your direction within reason, which typically

just means that you tell them what building to surround and whether they are allowed to open fire on the suspect when they see them or not. If not directed to shoot, they will assume normal police procedures.

Shackles. You will need some good shackles to hold a suspect once they are in your custody. Bounty shackles are the particular favorites in the bounty hunting community. (See Star Frontiersman #7, p.26.)

Retaining Area. Whether the back of a vehicle (for short periods), or a cage in a spaceship, you will need a place to keep a prisoner in transit. Have this available before the hunt or you will find it very difficult to keep your suspect in custody.

STUDYING YOUR TARGET

Collect information on your target's whereabouts and habits, as well as their current location and any details on these things by their peers. Watch the subject until you get comfortable with their habits. This is known as 'verifying your target'. It can also provide valuable insight that leads directly to your capturing them. Be sure to have as many eyes and ears out as you can wisely afford for that bounty.

PLANNING

Have your plan and be ready to execute it, making sure you have everything you need to make the capture. Have your money budgeted, your vehicles and spaceships chartered, and your plan of approach mapped out. Also make sure that your contacts in the area are aware that you are on the hunt so that they can better make time to assist you. While things rarely go according to plan, a plan gives you structure around which to adapt to changing situations.

THE BOUNTY HUNTER'S WISDOM

Keep an eye out for chances to double or even triple your bounty opportunities or for those who would stiff you for the bounty.

GETTING THE MOST FROM A BOUNTY

The best way to get the most from a bounty is to observe an individual with multiple bounties on them. You can deliver them to one non-legalistic agency and then another, delivering them to any legalistic agency last. Just be sure the agencies you deliver the subject to have hon-

orable intentions so that you can recover the subject to collect further bounties.

Another way to increase the number of bounties you can collect is to cross bounties. That is, to take a bounty subject to a bounty subject or to an agency that has an associate with a bounty. This makes it easy for you to pick up another bounty immediately after collecting on one.

Finally, be mindful of bounties that have been put out after you have picked up your subject to receive the bounty. Sometimes family thinks their relative, who happens to be your subject, has been kidnapped, and will put up a bounty to recover them. This is rare, but be mindful of such opportunities. It helps to be up to the minute with bounty information.

You may also try upping the bounty. If there is something questionable regarding the bounty, and you are not too bothered by conscience, you may request a higher bounty or request a special reimbursement. Careful, though, the more dangerous the agency, the more likely you may receive an unintended consequence of your 'large eyes'.

Informing an agency that there are other bounties out for the individual may also encourage them to pay more handsomely for the subject. Or the subject may even pay you more than their bounty to let them go. It would behoove you to turn them down. Remember, be wise to any opportunity to make more money from a bounty subject that is within the realm of your character's moral code. Try to keep your own level of greed separate from your character's greed.

BOUNTY COLLECTING GONE BAD

Be careful, though. Just as you are seeking to gain more money, less scrupulous individuals are seeking to pay you less than what you have been promised. Unfortunately, in such cases you will rarely get the full sum of what you were promised, but may make an effort to get more than what they are trying to stiff you with. Their hope is that you will roll over and take it.

Instead, make it important to them to give you at least half of what they have taken away from the promised bounty. To do this, you may have to put their's, and your, lives on the line to show them that you both lose if you don't get your money. But it would be better if you can simply get in a position to hurt them if they don't hand it over. You could also make their not giving you

the money more expensive to them through the destruction of their personal property or make their lives more personally difficult. In any case, you will need to act fast and think on your toes.

If, however, you have been completely stiffed and there is no likelihood of being able to recover your promised money through assistance from the authorities, then you will have to teach the agency a lesson and to make an example of them. You can do this by destroying their reputation, cost them unheard of sums of money, or rescue the bounty subject. In the end, it will show future agencies that you are not to be taken for granted.

COSTS AND REWARDS

It is vitally important to balance the cost of pursuing a bounty with the reward that comes after. It is great when you have to spend little to catch a big bounty, but this rarely happens. Keep track of your money.

EXPENDITURES

The following are the expenses you are likely to incur during the hunt. Be mindful of these and plan accordingly based on the reward for the bounty. Start out pursuing easy local bounties; as you perform bounties, you will get a better feel for the balance of cost to bounty.

Ship Overhaul. If you own a ship, then you know that it takes a lot of money to maintain, and thus only the most rewarding bounties are the ones you need to pursue off-world. Even still, it might come down to you having to sell your ship to complete the job, so do not get attached to any one ship. As much as you like your ride, it is just a means to an end. When it comes down to it, it is the bounty before your ship, unless your ship would be destroyed. If your ship runs the risk of being destroyed, it is better to cut and run with your ship in tact, as you can't get your money back on junk. Nor can you do it if you're not alive to enjoy it.

Travel Costs. If you don't have a ship or your own vehicle, or the local law requires you to use public transit, you will need to book passage on ships and rent vehicles or use local transit options. Be sure to budget this money carefully, as you do not want to be in the middle of a hunt only to run out of traveling money. It is better to have a surplus than to run dry at a critical moment.

Investigation Costs. Paying for the technology and information brokers to track your subject is generally the most forgiving of your expenses. Yes, the more you dish

out, the easier it is to track your subject, but if you are running short on funds, there are always alternative means of tracking; even doing it yourself is an option. But remember, you are not only paying for the service, you are paying for the familiarity with your broker. The closer you are to your information broker, the more perks you're likely to receive as a friend, but also the more they expect you to come in for them in a pinch. They can also help you find good deals on cheap surveillance gear at a moment's notice.

Time. Some of the more challenging bounties could take weeks or even months to recover; some have even taken years. However, the longer a bounty takes, the more likely some other bounty hunter will acquire it, so the sooner you get the bounty, the better, and you can move on to your next bounty. If you have chosen a bounty that is worth the cost of a long hunt, you may still augment your income during the hunt by bringing in local bounties wherever you happen to be during the long hunt. However, turning in a local hunt announces your presence to the bigger fish you are after; for the one who knows you specifically are after them, this could trigger them to make a change of scenery, so plan accordingly.

Bookkeeper. It is best to have an accountant that you can trust to take care of your money and advise you on how best to spend it. These guys know better than you how to track your money. They will generally charge 3% for accounting fees and 7% for advising, for a total of 10%.

Posse. The more successful bounty hunters have a posse of mercenaries to help them bring in the bounty subject. Though you may cut mercenaries in for a percentage if their skills are in high enough demand, most mercenaries work for a set fee. As long as the set fee mercenary gets paid, they're not worried about how much the bounty is. The goal of a true professional mercenary is to make sure you get paid so that they can get paid. Mercenaries don't care to be bounty hunters. Between you and your mercenaries there should be a smattering of skills from the four skill areas. If you travel from planet to planet, there should also be at least one Spacer skill per member of the party, preferably with you having the piloting skill.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Some charges and damages can be reimbursed to the hunter after a hunt. There are some things an expediting agent, corporation, or guild will promise to reimburse, but the primary source of reimbursement will be the

local government and the U.P.F. These include ground/atmospheric vehicle fuel and public transit cost, miscellaneous expenses that are both directly related to and incurred during the actual pursuit of the subject, and 10% of medical bills of injuries received directly from a suspect.

Guilds, corporations, and some expediting agents may offer insurance (beware, insurance companies will try any excuse not to pay you) or help relieve some medical bills, provide interplanetary transportation relief, vehicle fuel, and/or vehicle repair compensation.

REMUNERATION TYPES

It's not always and may not even be frequent that you receive a bounty in full. Non-corporate and non-governmental bounties are often paid through alternative remuneration. Below is a list of remuneration types to help you decide if a remuneration offer is acceptable. Just make sure the bounty source is reputable and has the means before you accept the bounty. Some will attempt to force you into remuneration that is nowhere near the value of the bounty they offered.

Deferred. Continuous payouts are a great way to make sure that money continues to come your way for a long time to come. Typical deferred payments occur from 2 months up to 10 years.

Grants. Grants to use property owned by them for your own purposes.

Bonds. Colony bonds may also be distributed in place of remuneration. This can be both lucrative and risky, as a collapsed colony means the loss of all investment, but the success of a single colony could make a hunter independently wealthy.

Rights. Rights to leech resources from land.

Stocks. The stock market, despite its unpredictable nature, continues to be an attractive source of investment.

Deeds. The deed to land for you to own or trade.

Interests. The promise of shares in overflow funds from mining, rigging, shipping, and other continuously profitable ventures. These have the additional benefit of being a great source of information on subjects who happen to use or be in the employ of the corporation in charge of those ventures.

Personal Property. Sometimes a single item is of enough worth to you to pay the fee, such as a spaceship, rare and valuable item, or base of operations.

Services. Use an individual or company's services for reduced or no charge, sometimes for a one time service.

Get Out of Jail Free. The individual, corporation, or even the government, will pull strings, hire the best legal counsel, and exhaust its resources within reason to get you out of one large legal jam in the future. A single favor you can call upon at any time sooner or later. You usually do not want to waste this on just a little jail time unless time and money are at stake. Neither is this a license to break the law. The agreement usually assumes your innocence or justification or at least justifies the investment.

Company Resources. The permission to use the resources of the individual or corporation as if you were a high ranking individual within the company.

Travel Brokerage. The company offers to arrange and pay for your travel up to a set cutoff point. This is a boon for a busy bounty hunter, and especially for one just starting out.

STANDARDIZING ADVENTURE REWARDS

If the Referee agrees or prefers, you may choose to standardize the reward as per the common practice of earnings in Star Frontiers. Without concern for common costs of transportation, living expenses, or supplies, you only track expenditures related to new gear and acquiring information during a hunt. Expediting agents and bookkeepers are considered already paid for. After all automatic expenses, the hunter retains 10% of the posted bounty as his reward. Rounders, however, simply get their payday as defined in their description. You do not get to keep the property of those whom you arrest. You do however always know when police auctions will be, where you can acquire goods for ultra-cheap.

ROBOTS AS BOUNTY HUNTERS

Anthropomorphic robots can make for exceptional bounty hunters because they lack fear and are very resourceful. However, they are extremely rare due to their legal status, or lack thereof. As a result, robot bounty hunters must have a licensed bounty hunter master. The bounty hunter master may allow the robot to operate on its own so long as each of its bounties are registered by the master.

The credits they earn go directly to their master who will generally provide an allotment of credits to the robot for maintenance, vehicle care, and paying for whatever services are required during the hunt. The robot is artificially restricted by the master's budget for the robot.

The masters of robot bounty hunters are usually bounty hunters, corporations, smalltime profiteers or a bounty hunter's guild. Disabled and retired bounty hunters also turn to using bounty hunter robots to provide their income as well as to allow them to live the glory days vicariously through their robot; often these masters act as robotics techs for their bounty hunter robot.

CAMPAIGNS

Because bounty hunters do not fit well as just another character within a normal campaign, the campaign must usually be built around a bounty hunter, or else several adventures within a campaign must be designed around the bounty hunter in order to give meaning to the character's occupation. If the party is going to exotic worlds where no one would need to put a bounty on anyone, the bounty hunter would be completely useless and designing adventures for them to take the lead in would be near impossible. A bounty hunter's livelihood is dependent upon regions possessing some kind of advanced social structure that has a place for bounty hunters.

A campaign that includes at least one bounty hunter in the party requires that the rest of the party have professions of use to the bounty hunter, as well as a plot arch that gives meaning to the bounty hunter's presence within the party with a sense of usefulness that advances the story. Below are several bounty hunter campaign concepts.

Bounty, Inc. The best way to include bounty hunters in a party is to base the whole campaign around bounty hunting. A group of bounty hunters or a bounty hunter and a group of mercs work together to take down a different bounty subject with each adventure. You can focus on one bounty type (robots or recovery, etc.) or take any jobs you can get for variety.

Law enforcement. The bounty hunter has enlisted the services of local law enforcement or Star Law to assist in taking down a known fugitive. The rest of the party represents their assigned contingent to assist in the apprehension of a suspect. A campaign could be based around chasing down a single bounty subject, but any other bounty subject chased would have to relative to the

first. However, because such help is lent only temporarily, most bounties are not worthy of an entire campaign, but only a single adventure. On the other hand, such bounties make for a decent guest slot for anyone joining your gaming group for a single session, with the guest usually acting as the bounty hunter.

Mutual benefit. The party has banded together for mutual benefit, each advancing other characters' careers within the party, thus the bounty hunter aids other characters in their professions and expects the same help in return. However, this can be a source of in-character friction within the party which could actually be useful for adding drama and character development to the story.

Task force. Another possibility is that a corporation culls the group together, employing the bounty hunter to bring back the primary antagonist. The rest of the party serves to perform specific missions regarding the antagonist, such as bringing down their network, thwarting their plans, or investigating what they are after, while the bounty hunter's one and only concern remains to be to capture or elimination of the antagonist. This can make for an entire campaign.

BEGINNING THE HUNT

Now that you have received a full course on bounty hunting, let's review the information in brief as you will experience it on a typical hunt.

You go to the station house, guild, or other source of bounties to carefully look up and consider who your next bounty will be, taking note of whether you have the means to finish the hunt and get your reward. Then you set things in place for the hunt. After everything is ready

and your travel plans are set, then you set about getting information on your subject, where they are, what their habits are, and considering where best to round them up. Then you set your trap and get ready to spring it. When you have caught your subject, deliver them, with appropriate transportation if necessary, to the local authorities or interested party who will then verify the capture or kill, and in short order you will receive your bounty.

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